Creative Learning Initiative:
Implementation Summary, 2018–2019

Department of Research and Evaluation
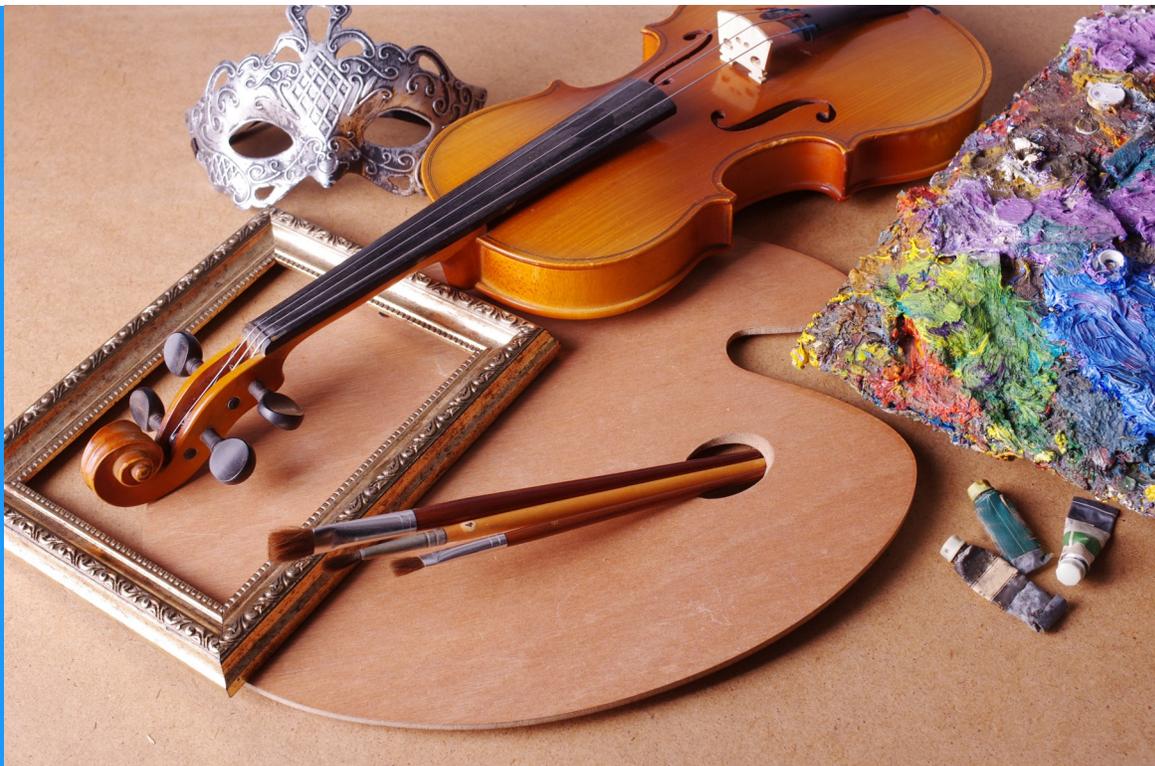
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Creative Learning Initiative (CLI) is a community-wide effort to bring creative learning and the arts to each and every student in Austin. Lead by MINDPOP, the City of Austin, and the Austin Independent School District (AISD), CLI supports systematic and sustainable programs that integrate creativity, the arts, and Creative Teaching strategies with classroom teaching, campus programming, and campus improvement. CLI has provided 63 campuses with the ongoing support to design and implement comprehensive campus plans to become more arts rich. At the campus level, the three pillars of the program are to (a) increase students' access to sequential fine arts instruction, (b) increase community arts programming during and out of the school day, and (c) foster classroom learning with Creative Teaching across the curriculum. During the first 3 years of program implementation, foundational campuses receive a robust set of support interventions (e.g., professional development opportunities, follow-up coaching, and supplemental arts instruction in drama and dance), then graduate to a sustaining campus status that assumes greater campus independence and less reliance on support services. In 2018–2019, the program continued to achieve milestones toward program implementation in these four areas: districtwide arts richness, sequential fine arts, community arts partnerships, and Creative Teaching.

District-wide Arts Richness

1. CLI continues to serve a disproportional number of economically disadvantaged and at-risk students: CLI has historically served high-needs schools to address inequities in access to the arts. In 2018–2019, CLI served a higher percentage of students who attended Title I schools, were economically disadvantaged, and were labeled as at risk, when compared with district proportions.

2. CLI support is critical to arts richness at Title I schools: For the third year in a row, CLI has been shown to support the equitable distribution of Creative Campuses between its Title I and non-Title I campuses. This achievement is important because research shows that access to the arts is especially advantageous to low-income students, and yet it is often those exact populations who lack equitable access to the arts. However, we have found that arts richness declines after 6 years in CLI.

> **Recommendation 1: Because we found that implementation declines after 6 years, we recommend that sustaining campuses have planned reinforcements beginning in year 6, to keep levels of arts richness high.**

Sequential Fine Arts

1. CLI schools had greater student access to sequential fine arts instruction at the elementary level than did non-CLI schools: At every grade level, elementary students at CLI schools had more regular opportunities to study dance, drama, and media arts than did students at non-CLI schools. Some of this difference in exposure can be explained by the direct work of the CLI dance and drama specialists who come to each school for one semester and usually work with the 2nd grade class. However, access to dance, drama, and media arts in CLI schools remains higher than in non-CLI schools across all grade

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levels, persisting even in those grade levels not visited by the dance and drama specialists.

> Recommendation 2: We recommend formal sharing of best practices from the elementary school leaders who have found creative ways to offer dance, drama, and media arts learning objectives with leaders who have not yet found ways to make it work in their schools.

Community Arts Partnerships

1. CLI schools had greater student exposure to community arts partners at Title I schools than did non-CLI schools: The exposure students at CLI Title I schools had to community arts partners was twice as great as the exposure at all other schools. Across all elementary schools, the average exposure rate was 10.2 hours per student. At the secondary level, the average exposure rate was 4.9 hours per student. At both the elementary and secondary levels, Title I schools that received support from CLI reported higher average student arts partner exposure rates than did non-CLI Title I schools, and surprisingly, they even reported higher average student arts partner exposure rates than did non-Title I schools that are supported by CLI.

> Recommendation 3: We recommend continued support to develop secondary arts partnerships.

Creative Teaching

1. Most teachers reported they used Creative Teaching frequently and that it engaged students and improved their instruction: Fifty-eight percent of teachers reported using Creative Teaching strategies at least once a week or more in their classrooms. The vast majority of teachers reported that using Creative Teaching engaged their students (94%); importantly, more than half also indicated that it improved their instructional practice (56%) and fostered content retention (51%).

2. Teacher's perceptions of Creative Teaching utility and coach quality remained high, despite multiple coaching implementation challenges: The slight decreases in positive perceptions of utility and coach quality were not unexpected due to the reduction in coaching support provided in 2018–2019. Specifically, in 2018–2019 only 34% of foundational teachers received coaching services, whereas in 2017–2018, coaching services were received by 60% of foundational teachers. Much of this can be explained by the factors that had an impact on the availability of CLI coaches, one of which was the district's redesign of the academic department and campus support structures through instructional coaching. New professional development demands on coach time, and time spent designing the new systems of support for the district, necessitated that coaches spend less time doing direct coaching on campus. Despite challenges faced in implementation, teachers' perceptions of the program remained very positive.

> Recommendation 4: We recommend the development of supports to increase the frequency of Creative Teaching use.

Overall, CLI implementation in 2018–2019 was comparable to prior years, with more robust implementation at the elementary level than at the secondary level. At the

elementary level, the district goal for arts partnerships was far exceeded in all grade levels. Additionally, teachers continued to have positive perceptions of Creative Teaching strategies and its impact on students (e.g., engaging students). However, programmatic challenges were faced as well. For example, secondary schools continued to have more challenges implementing Creative Teaching than did elementary schools and establishing arts partnerships that integrate with core academics. The following report summarizes the implementation of the components of CLI during 2018–2019 and provides recommendations.

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Program Description

The Creative Learning Initiative (CLI) is a city-wide collaboration between MINDPOP, the City of Austin, Austin Independent School District (AISD), and more than 100 arts and cultural organizations dedicated to equitable access to creative learning and the arts for every student in Austin. The CLI model is grounded in research that shows that arts programs in and out of school have a powerful impact on both student cognition and youth development (Ruppert, 2006). State-wide research also identified a positive relationship between arts participation and academic achievement, attendance, graduation, and enrollment in higher education (Texas Cultural Trust, 2015). The same research revealed access to those arts courses was not equitably distributed across regions, across districts, or within schools, particularly in high-poverty areas. Initiatives such as CLI in Austin seek to ameliorate these inequities.

In 2011, MINDPOP partnered with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to help community leaders conduct an inventory of arts access, assess needs, develop common goals, design a strategic action plan, and commit to the shared measurement of our impact and continuous communication. The current CLI model, designed by MINDPOP through a community process, is comprehensive, providing support at the classroom level, the district level, and the community level to (a) create arts-rich schools; (b) create a community network to support and sustain quality creative learning opportunities for the development of the whole child; (c) develop the leaders and systems required for sustainability; and (d) demonstrate measurable impacts on students, families, schools, and our community. Examples of the support provided through the systematic approach of the CLI model include policy recommendations at the school-board level; curriculum development support at the district level; campus planning support for principals; professional development opportunities for teachers, including personalized coaching, and dance and theater instruction for elementary students; and professional development opportunities to increase pedagogical skills and align city programs with school needs for community arts partners and parks and recreation instructional staff.

The robust program model represents best practices in instructional theory, systems change, and arts education. Within AISD, it operates on a staged implementation schedule that typically adds eight to 12 schools per year, organized by feeder pattern or vertical team. Campuses in a vertical team work collectively for 3 foundational years. Each foundational year, teachers focus on integrating Creative Teaching strategies from a different art form into their teaching practices, while principals and teacher leaders build capacity toward sustainability. Campuses that are not yet enrolled in the program are called non-CLI schools but have access to some of the same district-wide supports and some professional development opportunities. At each campus, the initiative works to ensure equitable access to fine arts learning, Creative Teaching across the curriculum, and access to community arts organizations and resources. In combination, these pillars align efforts in schools and across the community to provide an arts-rich experience for every student in Austin.

In 2018–2019, CLI served 63 of the 130 schools across the district, a total of 49% of the

schools in AISD. Eighteen foundational CLI schools were in two vertical teams (Anderson and LBJ) and 45 sustaining schools were in four vertical teams (McCallum, Travis, Crockett, and Eastside). All CLI schools were served by a small district team of 4.5 instructional coaches, five dance or drama specialists, and program leadership (Table 1), supplemented by contracted partners. In additional to serving those existing schools, they focused on developing the 2019–2020 acceleration plan, designed to triple the number of schools rolling-in to CLI during the 2019–2020 academic year.

Table 1.
Summary of CLI Participation and Services in 2018–2019

CLI Status	CLI Total	CLI Foundational	CLI Sustaining	Non-CLI
# of campuses	63	18	45	52
# of vertical teams	6	2	4	6
# of students	38,508	16,251	22,257	44,567
# of teachers	2,763	978	1,785	2,830
Creative campus leadership				
Campus leadership completes annual arts inventory		✓	✓	✓
Receive annual Creative Campus profile		✓	✓	✓
Arts richness goal required in campus improvement plan		✓	✓	
Direct principal support		✓	✓	
Support for teacher leaders			✓	
Creative teaching across the curriculum				
Instructional coaches provided		3.5 coaches	1 coach	0
Creative teaching workshops mandatory		✓		
Additional Creative Teaching workshops offered		✓	✓	✓
Arts partnerships				
Assistance with arts partner coordination		✓	✓	✓
$ for arts partnership ($4-$8 per student)		✓	✓	
Sequential fine arts				
Arts specialists provided for elementary dance and theater		3 specialists	2 specialists	0
CLI advocates for pro sequential fine arts policies		✓	✓	✓

Source. 2018–2019 AISD Arts Inventory (*n* = 115) and course enrollment data from 2018–2019
Note. CLI foundational = status during the first 3 years of intense support; CLI sustaining = automatic status after foundational years; Non-CLI = not yet in the CLI rotation.

CLI Student Demographics

Finding 1: CLI served proportionally more students who were economically disadvantaged or characterized as at risk than students who were not economically disadvantaged or characterized as at risk.

CLI has historically served high-needs schools to address inequities in access to the arts. As CLI expanded to support 49% of the districts' schools, the demographic characteristics of CLI students began to more closely match that of the districts' student demographics, specifically in the percentages of limited English proficiency (LEP) students, special education (SPED) students, and gifted and talented (GT) students. However, some differences remain. In 2018–2019, compared with the district proportions, CLI served a higher percentage of students who attended Title I schools, students who were economically disadvantaged, and students who were labeled as at

risk (Figure 1). The majority of CLI students were at the elementary level (57%), with 21% at the middle and 22% at the high school level, which was roughly proportional to the district population.

CLI served proportionally more economically disadvantaged students than the district.

Bar chart showing CLI and AISD percentages across three categories: Title I (CLI 59%, AISD 50%), Econ Dis (CLI 60%, AISD 56%), At risk (CLI 52%, AISD 51%). Legend: CLI, AISD.
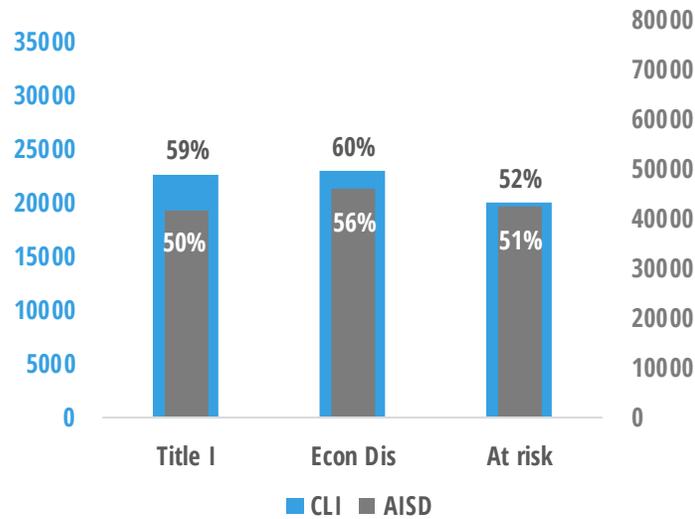
Source. 2018–2019 AISD student records
Note. The scale on the right is the number of students served by CLI, the scale on the left is the number of students in the district. Econ Dis = economically disadvantaged

Arts Richness

What does it mean to be a Creative Campus?

The visionary goal of CLI is to ensure all AISD schools are Creative Campuses. The term *Creative Campus* is a multifaceted way to summarize a framework of nine components that can come together in a myriad of ways to ensure an entire school community benefits from the arts. The nine components are (Figure 2):

1. Access to sequential fine arts in multiple art forms (music, dance, visual arts, theater, and digital media)

2. Professional development opportunities in Creative Teaching

3. Creative Teaching across the curriculum

4. Community arts partnerships to enrich students' arts experiences during the school day

5. Community-building arts events hosted by the campus

6. Access to arts learning after school

7. School communication to share the school's value of arts richness with the community

8. Campus leadership, including a strategic approach to increasing arts richness

9. Facilities to accommodate arts programming

Figure 2.
Nine Components of a Creative Campus

Source. MINDPOP

Finding 2: The district-wide percentage of campuses meeting the Creative Campus standard increased to 63% in 2018–2019.

Findings from 2018–2019 indicated that 63% of AISD schools met or exceeded the many criteria needed to attain the classification of Creative Campus (Figure 3, see Appendices A and B for the full rubrics). In 2018–2019, 100% of schools submitted their data for the Creative Campus profile, the first time that was achieved.[1]

Figure 3.
In 2018–2019, 63% of AISD schools were Creative Campuses.
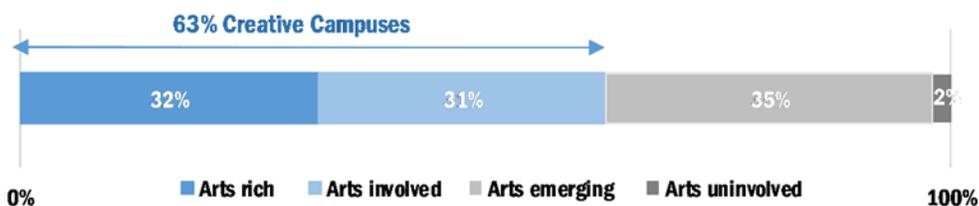
Source. 2018–2019 AISD Arts Inventory (*n* = 115) and course enrollment data from 2018–2019

The overall increase of 4 percentage points between 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 was even across elementary and secondary schools, but the disparity between the proportion of elementary schools and secondary schools that achieve Creative Campus status continued to characterize the district-wide distribution (Figure 4).

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[1] These schools were exempt from scoring due to their unique nature: Clifton Career Development Center, Garza Independent High School, Graduation Prep Academy at Lanier, Rosedale School, Graduation Prep Academy at Travis, Alternative Learning Center (ALC), Webb Primary, Elementary DAEP, Dobie Pre-kindergarten, and Uphaus Early Childhood Center.

Figure 4.

In 2018–2019, the percentage of schools meeting the Creative Campus standard increased by 4 percentage points overall, as well as at the elementary and secondary levels.

| | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 |
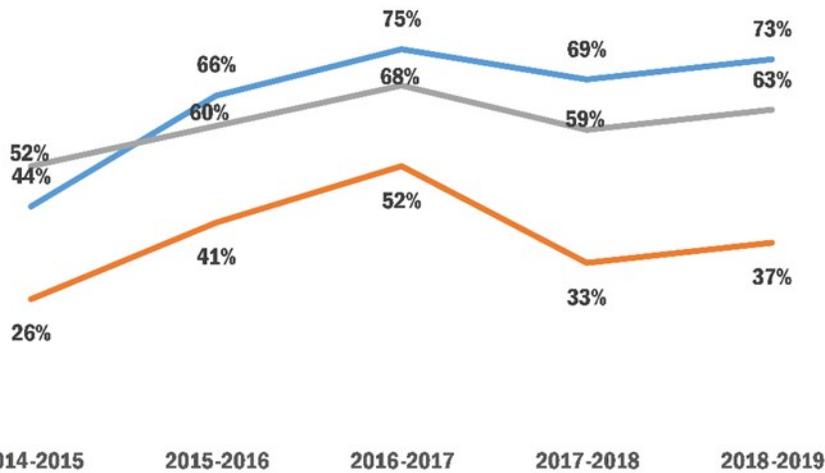
Source. AISD Arts Inventory from 2014–2015 (*n* = 106), 2015–2016 (*n* = 95), 2016–2017 (*n* = 106), 2017–2018 (*n* = 104), and 2018–2019 (*n* = 115) and course enrollment data from 2018–2019

Finding 3: CLI support was critical to arts richness, especially at Title I schools.

Creative Campus standards were developed through a community input process with school administrators, teachers, arts leaders, scholars, and professionals in the field. This information was standardized in a rubric developed by AISD's Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) and MINDPOP. Schools could meet this standard in different ways, but it was clear that having the support of CLI made it much more likely that a school would meet the standard. While only 41% of non-CLI schools met the standard in 2018—2019, twice as many CLI schools met the standard, indicating that CLI's support was important to this achievement (Figure 5).

Figure 5.

In 2018–2019, schools were twice as likely to meet the Creative Campus standard when they received robust CLI supports.
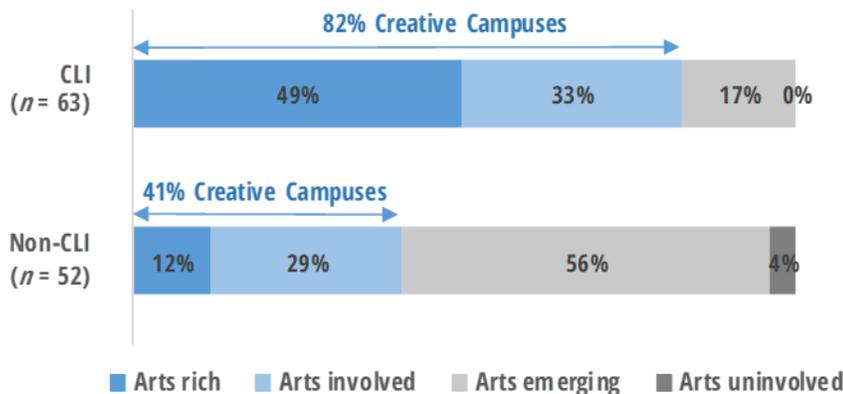
Source. 2018–2019 AISD Arts Inventory (*n* = 115) and course enrollment data from 2018–2019

For the third year in a row, CLI has been shown to support equitable distribution of Creative Campuses across the Title I and non-Title I campuses within its program. When we compare the top two bars of Figure 6 (in blue), we can see that there was little difference at CLI schools between the proportion of Title I (82%) and non-Title I (83%) schools reaching the Creative Campus standards. In contrast, when we compare the bottom two bars of Figure 6 (in orange), we can see that the proportion of schools reaching that standard at non-CLI schools was 22 percentage points lower for Title I schools than non-Title I schools. As Figure 6 also shows, when comparing the second and fourth bars, Title I schools were 2.6 times more likely to meet the Creative Campus standard when they are supported by CLI than when they were not. These program achievements are important because research shows that access to the arts is especially advantageous to low-income students, and yet it is often those exact populations who lack equitable access to the arts.

Figure 6.
In 2018–2019, Title I schools were almost three times as likely to meet the Creative Campus standard when they were a part of the CLI.
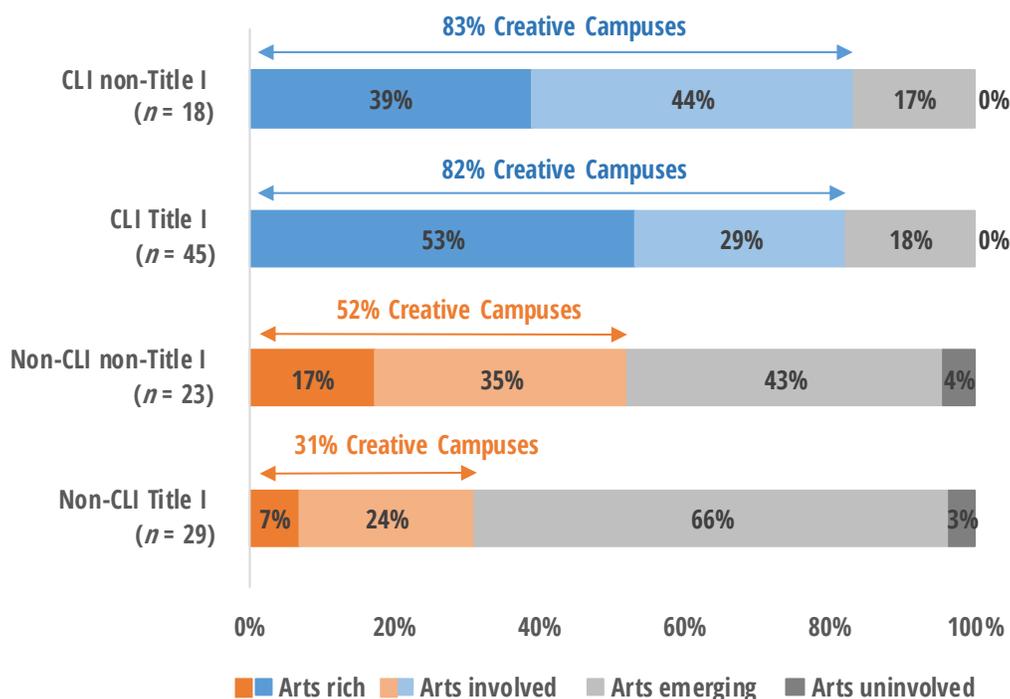
Source. 2018–2019 AISD Arts Inventory (*n* = 115) and course enrollment data from 2018–2019

Finding 4: Creative Campus status declined for all participating CLI schools after the fifth year of engagement.

When we disaggregated the data on Creative Campus status by the number of years each school had been in CLI, there was a dramatic difference from 2017–2018 to 2018–2019 for the schools in the first or second year of the sustaining phase (an increase of 6 percentage points) and for the schools in the third year or more of the sustaining phase (a decrease of 9 percentage points). Not unsurprisingly, in 2017–2018, the cohort of schools that had been in the program the longest had the highest percentage of schools meeting the Creative Campus standard. However, by 2018–2019, this same cohort had

the lowest percentage of schools meeting the standard (Figure 7). Schools continued to flourish, and even increased their arts richness a couple of years after the foundational support was completed, but this trend may suggest that high levels of arts richness are hard to maintain beyond that without additional program support. Is it also possible, however, that these two vertical teams decreased in arts richness this year because of their unique order in program implementation. In the first 2 years of implementation, there was less focus on building sustainability than there was for schools that started the program in later years. In the future, we might not see a similar decrease in vertical teams that reach the same phase but entered the program after it had a more developed approach to sustainability. More investigation is needed.

Figure 7.

The percentage of schools meeting the Creative Campus standard in 2018–2019 increased for those in the first or second year of sustaining status but decreased for those sustaining longer.*
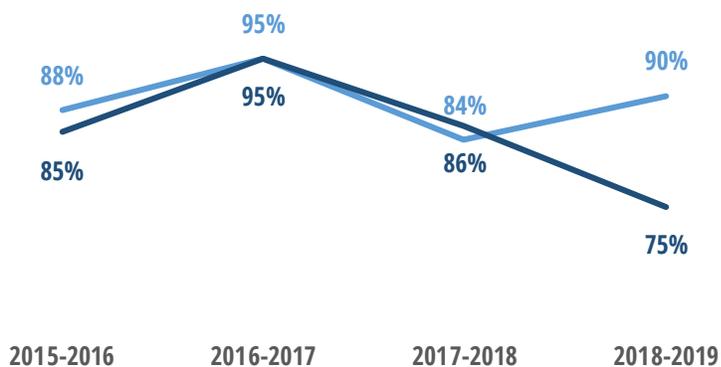
Source. AISD Arts Inventory from 2014–2015 (*n* = 37), 2015–2016 (*n* = 41), 2016–2017 (*n* = 40), 2017–2018 (*n* = 104), and 2018–2019 (*n* = 45) and course enrollment data from 2018–2019

Note. * Third or fourth year sustaining status.

Fine Arts Participation

Finding 5: At every grade level, elementary students at CLI schools had more regular opportunities to study dance, drama, and media arts than students at non-CLI schools had.

Texas education code (19 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 74, subchapter A) mandates that school districts provide Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)-based instruction in music, art, and theater in kindergarten through grades 5. AISD provides music and visual arts instruction to kindergarten through 5th grade for at least 45 minutes every 3 days. However, the requirements for theater, dance, and media arts are much less defined, and regular opportunities to study theater, dance, and media arts are not scheduled in a standard rotation. Unlike music and visual arts, elementary dance and media arts do not have the same specific state requirements, so, like for theater, opportunities vary significantly for each school and grade. Incorporating instruction into these additional art forms can be challenging for schools because they must find the time in the schedule and someone qualified to offer the instruction, without any additional funding. Additionally, 15% of elementary schools report sometimes pulling students from their arts courses for other purposes.

To address these systemic challenges, CLI tried to increase students' opportunities to study all art forms. In 2018–2019, a greater percentage of CLI schools than of non-CLI schools had opportunities for drama, dance, and media arts courses (Figure 8). Some of this difference in exposure can be explained by the direct work of the CLI dance and drama specialists, who come to each school for one semester and usually worked with the 2nd-grade class. However, it is notable that the differences between CLI and non-CLI schools persisted even in grades where the specialists did not usually visit. Other arts opportunities might be made possible through CLI's funding of arts partnerships, grants, and special projects initiated by campus staff.

Figure 8.

Students had more regular opportunities to take drama, dance, and media arts at CLI schools than at non-CLI schools.

Drama / Dance / Media Arts charts by grade (KG–5th):

Drama — CLI: KG 41%, 1st 36%, 2nd 53%, 3rd 33%, 4th 31%, 5th 33%; non-CLI: KG 14%, 1st 19%, 2nd 17%, 3rd 19%, 4th 28%, 5th 22%

Dance — CLI: KG 41%, 1st 40%, 2nd 62%, 3rd 33%, 4th 33%, 5th 29%; non-CLI: KG 28%, 1st 31%, 2nd 31%, 3rd 28%, 4th 31%, 5th 28%

Media Arts — CLI: KG 32%, 1st 36%, 2nd 38%, 3rd 38%, 4th 33%, 5th 44%; non-CLI: KG 17%, 1st 14%, 2nd 17%, 3rd 22%, 4th 31%, 5th 22%
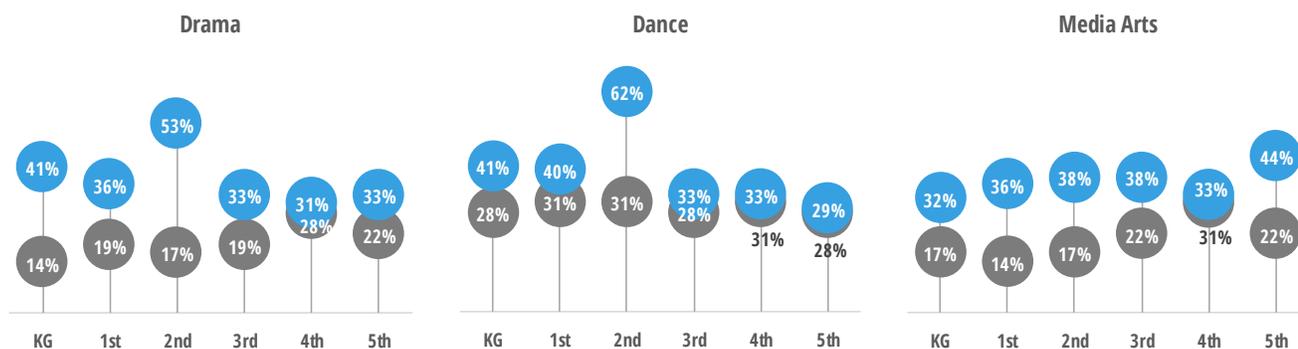
Source. 2018–2019 AISD Arts Inventory (*n* = 81)

Note. The figure represents the percentage of schools in each group (CLI, non-CLI) with regular offerings in these art forms, with six classes or more. For a more complete picture of the different frequencies of exposure, see the Creative Campus Profiles (2018–2019). KG = kindergarten.

Examples of Advanced Opportunities During the Elementary School Day

"Our 5th-grade students partake in a 5th-grade musical. They have rehearsals the last month of school and a final production on the last week of school. Students learn the musical script, dances, and songs. Our 5th- and 6th-grade students are able to participate in the Film Kids program two times a week. They create a news broadcast on a weekly basis. This is an enrichment program funded by our PTA."

"Students are provided with instrument instruction beginning in kindergarten and play in a full ensemble by the time they are in 2nd-grade. Arts are integrated throughout all the early childhood curriculum and occur daily."

"Fourth-grade – Academy 4: ceramics, calligraphy, media arts, guitar, dance"

"Additional music and visual art instruction when connected to thematic unit performance for each grade level, this is probably about 10 extra hours for each a year."

"The librarian sees all scholars prekindergarten through grade 5 and supports the theater/ drama/ media arts."

Finding 6: At the secondary level, students at CLI schools took more arts courses than those at non-CLI schools in 2018–2019, particularly at CLI's non-Title I schools.

In 2018–2019, middle school students tended to have slightly higher participation in fine arts classes than high school students (effect size = 0.287), with middle school students taking on average 0.965 "credits" per year, and high school students taking 0.812 credits per year, see Fine Arts Credits Methodology box below. Middle school students had higher participation in music than high school students (effect size = 0.532). High school students had very slightly more participation in visual arts (effect size = 0.0601), theater (effect size = 0.128), and dance (effect size = 0.222). Dance numbers are known to be unreliable, however, as many middle school dance courses are homed in the physical education (PE) department and often are not cross-coded as arts classes.*

The average number of arts credits attempted by students differed significantly by CLI status, with students at CLI schools attempting more arts credits than non-CLI school students, on average (Figure 9) and students at Title I schools taking less arts credits than students at non-Title I schools (Figure 10). However, in Title I schools, students averaged the same amount of attempted arts credits regardless of their school's CLI status (Figure 11). Figure 11 shows that students at Title I schools averaged the same amount of attempted arts credits regardless of CLI status and that CLI seems to be related to more arts enrollments at non-Title I schools, leaving work to be done to bridge the inequity gap between non-Title I and Title I schools in fine arts participation.

Fine Art Credits Methodology

At both the middle and high school levels in AISD, students are expected to complete two semesters of fine arts courses during their tenure in 6th through 8th grade, per AISD policy, and again in 9th through 12th grade, per Texas graduation requirements. At the middle school level, school staff have a great deal of discretion in what counts as a fine arts course and when exceptions to the middle school policy can be made. At the high school level, this requirement is tied to the graduation plan of every student by Texas education code (19 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 74, subchapter B), and designated fine arts courses must be approved by the legislature. Since fine arts requirements are based on the amount of credits taken over the years in middle or high school, students are not required to take a fine arts course every year or semester. However, some students take more courses than required to meet the middle or high school requirement, and attempt fine arts courses every year.

To understand access to sequential fine arts in secondary schools, the number of fine arts semesters attempted in 2018–2019 were counted for non-mobile students (i.e., students who attended the same school at least 85% of the school year). While this underestimated the amount of sequential fine arts learning at any one campus, it allowed for more consistent comparisons for campuses with a high rate of mobility. At the high school level, each semester course was worth a half credit and classes were usually but not always taken a year at a time to earn one credit. Technically speaking, middle school students did not earn credits, but we adopted that language to be consistent across school levels.

*Classes that were not cross listed were not discoverable, and hence not included in the analysis.

Figure 9.

**Students at CLI schools averaged significantly more arts credits than did students at non-CLI schools.**

0.96 — CLI
0.82 — Non-CLI
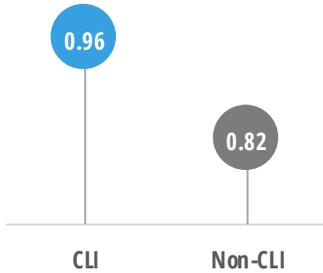
Source. 2018–2019 Course enrollment data
Note. Effect size = 0.158; (*n* = 33,078).

Figure 10.

Students at non-Title I schools averaged significantly more arts credits than did students at Title I schools.

0.92 — Non-Title I
0.79 — Title I
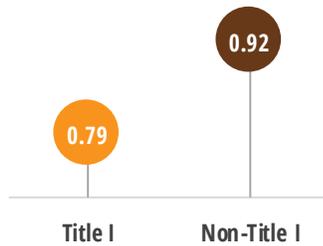
Source. 2018–2019 Course enrollment data
Note. Effect size = 0.131; (*n* = 33,078).

Figure 11.

Students at CLI Title I schools averaged the same amount of arts credits as did students at non-CLI Title I schools.

1.08 — CLI non-Title I
0.79 — CLI Title I
0.79 — Non-CLI Title I
0.83 — Non-CLI non-Title I
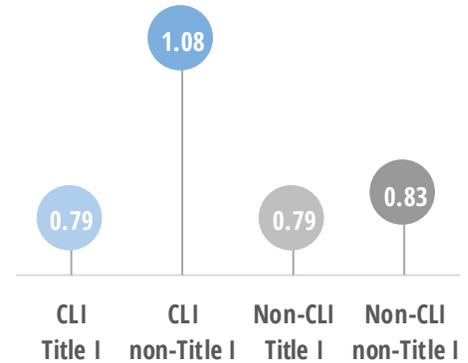
Source. 2018–2019 Course Enrollment data
Note. (*n* = 33,078).

Figures 9 through 11 represent the average number of credits taken in 2018–2019 but do not quite capture the different levels of participation that characterize the diversity of students' arts experiences. To illuminate those differences, Figures 12 through 14 divide participation into groups, with students who took two art credits or more (e.g., four semester courses or more) designated as highly arts engaged. The percentage of students at CLI schools who were classified as highly arts engaged was greater than the percentage at non-CLI schools (Figure 12). Students attending non-Title I schools had higher percentages of high engagement than did students at Title I schools (Figure 13). However, as is seen from the average number of credits taken, CLI non-Title I schools had the highest percentage of high arts engagement (Figure 14).

Figure 12.

Students at CLI schools were more highly arts-engaged than were students at non-CLI schools.

CLI: 35% | 49% | 13% | 4% — High arts engagement (17%)
Non-CLI: 39% | 50% | 9% | 2% — High arts engagement (11%)

■ 0 - 0.99 credits ■ 1 - 1.99 credits ■ 2 - 2.99 credits ■ 3+ credits
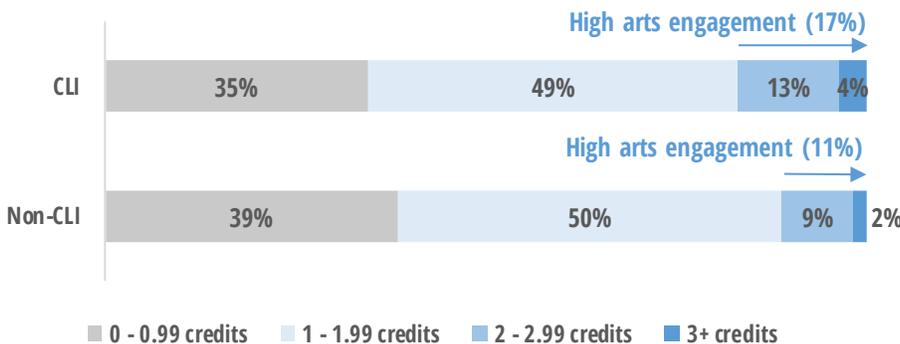
Source. 2018–2019 Course enrollment data
Note. (*n* = 33,078)

Figure 13.

Students at non-Title I schools were more highly arts-engaged than were students at Title I schools.

High arts engagement (9%)

| Title I | 42% | 50% | 8% | 1% |

High arts engagement (17%)

| Non-Title I | 34% | 49% | 13% | 4% |

■ 0 - 0.99 credits ■ 1 - 1.99 credits ■ 2 - 2.99 credits ■ 3+ credits
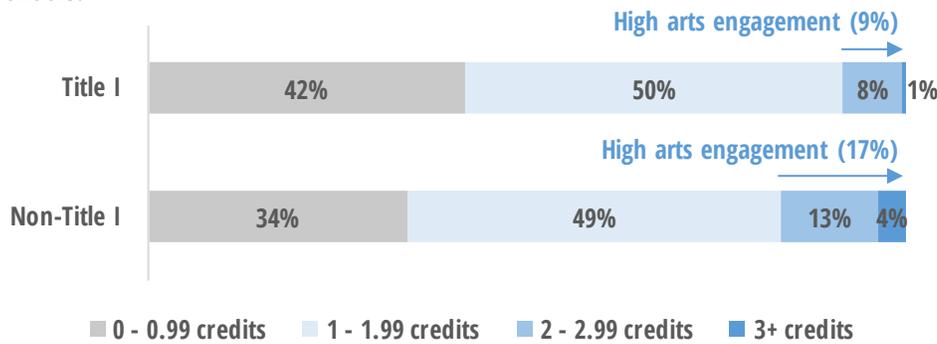
Source. 2018–2019 Course enrollment data
Note. (*n* = 33,078)

Figure 14.

Students at CLI non-Title I schools were more highly arts-engaged than were students at other types of schools.

High arts engagement (8%)

| CLI Title I | 41% | 51% | 8% | 0% |

High arts engagement (23%)

| CLI non-Title I | 30% | 46% | 17% | 6% |

High arts engagement (9%)

| Non-CLI Title I | 43% | 48% | 8% | 1% |

High arts engagement (12%)

| Non-CLI non-Title I | 37% | 51% | 10% | 2% |

■ 0 - 0.99 credits ■ 1 - 1.99 credits ■ 2 - 2.99 credits ■ 3+ credits
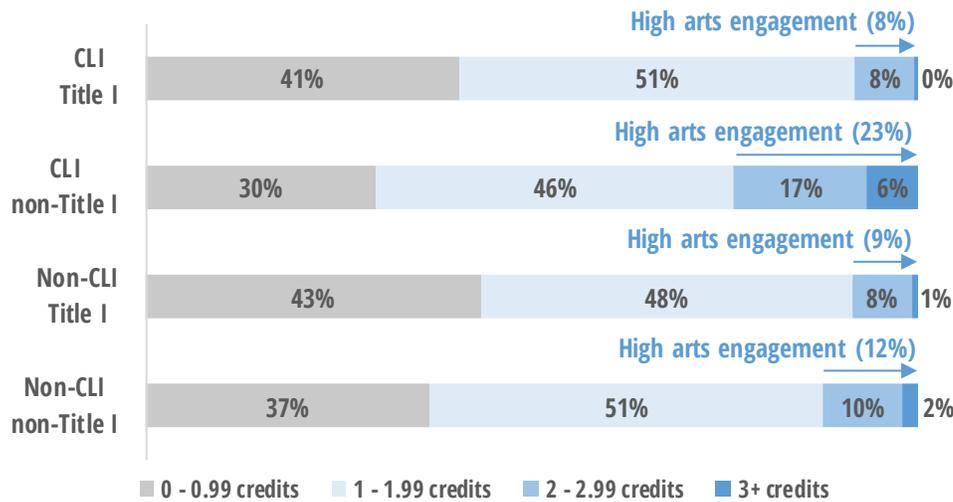
Source. 2018–2019 Course enrollment data
Note. (*n* = 33,078)

For more information about middle and high school fine arts participation see our Secondary Fine Arts Participation Interactive Report (AISD, 2019). It explores fine arts participation since 2016–2017 for these factors:

Campus Factors
- **CLI status**
- **CLI type (foundational or sustaining)**
- **Title I status**

Student factors
- **Economic disadvantage**
- **Gender**
- **LEP status**
- **At-risk status**
- **SPED status**
- **Race and ethnicity**
- **Career and technical education status**
- **GT status**

Art Forms
- **Music**
- **Visual arts**
- **Theater**
- **Dance**

CLI Addressing the Equity Issue in AISD

Research has shown that disadvantaged students who are engaged in the arts benefit both academically and nonacademically. For example:

- Arts-engaged low-income students were four times more likely than low-income students not involved in the arts to have high academic achievement (Heath, Soep, & Roach, 1998).

- AIMS Arts integration schools reduced the reading gap by 14 percentage points and the math gap by 26 percentage points over a 3-year period (RealVisions, 2007).

- Low socioeconomic status secondary students attending an arts-rich school were twice as likely as those attending an arts-poor school to attend college (Catterall, 2009).

In reaction to this research, a committee of Austin stakeholders conducted a study of the arts landscape in AISD in 2011–2012. That analysis supported this body of research. It found that among AISD students in high-poverty schools, those who were engaged in the arts had better state test passing rates (8 to 29 percentage points) in every subject, higher rates of attendance (up to 5.2 percentage points), and better graduation rates (20 percentage points) than did similar students not engaged in the arts. Unfortunately, that initial inventory of arts offerings also revealed that **AISD students' access to the arts was inconsistent across the district.** In too many cases, the students who could most benefit from arts participation had less access to arts instruction and had fewer art forms and fewer community arts partnerships at their schools than did those who stood to benefit less.

Upon discovering AISD's disparities in access to the arts, and knowing the benefits of arts-rich education for disadvantaged students, **CLI was designed to create arts-rich schools FOR ALL STUDENTS.** Although the initiative is not exclusively for Title I schools, CLI does aim to close the gap of arts access that has historically been present in AISD, by weighting program applications for selection in favor of historically underserved schools with a high percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch.
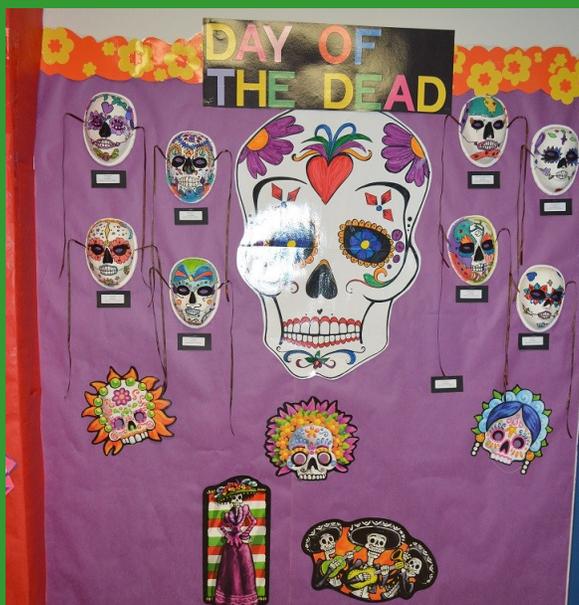
Community Arts Partnerships Outcomes

Finding 7: Every elementary grade-level exceeded the CLI goal of two community arts partners per grade.

At the elementary level, arts partnerships tend to be coordinated at the grade level. When CLI began, the program established a goal that each grade level would have at least two community arts partners. In 2013–2014, that goal was met in 2nd through 5th grade, but not in the earlier grades. In comparison, in 2018–2019, all grades met the goal and all grades increased the average number of partnerships at each grade level. Students tend to have more access to more arts partners as they move through elementary school. CLI and non-CLI schools had a similar average number of partners per grade level.

Figure 15.
In 2018–2019, the average number of arts partnerships per grade level far exceeded the program goal and was much improved since 2013–2014.

program target goal:
two arts partners per grade

	PreK	KG	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
2018–2019	2.6	3.7	3.9	4.1	5.1	5.0	4.9
2013–2014	1.5	1.8	1.7	2.0	3.4	3.1	3.0
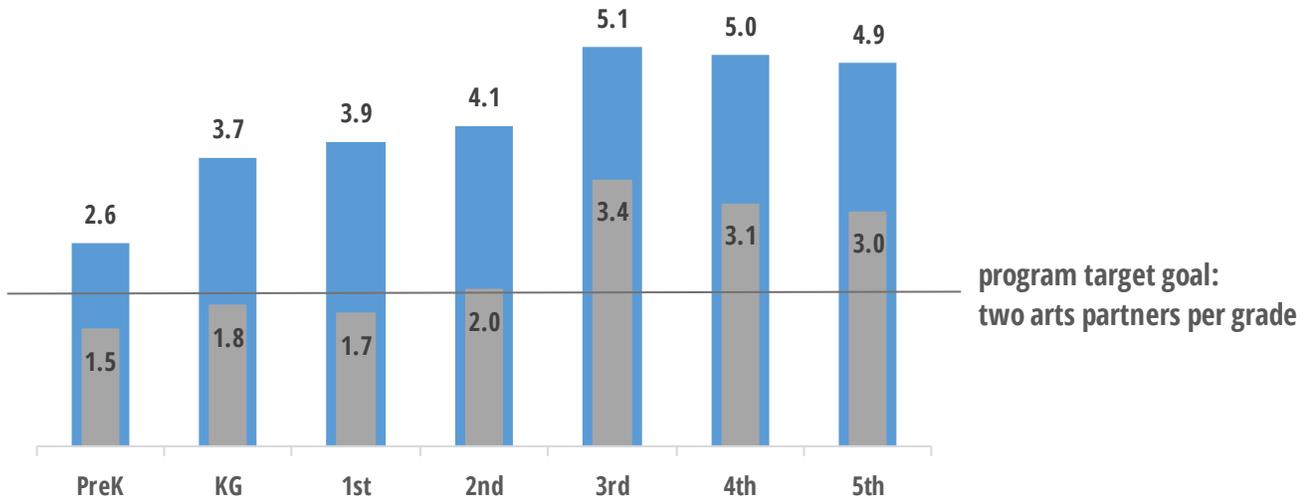
Source. 2013–2014 Arts Inventory, 2018–2019 AISD Arts Inventory
Note. The number (*n* = 83) of programs surveyed was the same each year.

Finding 8: Secondary students had more exposure to community arts partnerships in their fine arts classes than in core academic subjects.

At the secondary level, arts partnerships are counted by the coordinating departments. At arts-rich schools, community arts partners collaborate with the fine arts classes as an extension to the regular curriculum in that art form, and also with subject areas such as foreign language and social studies, in order to integrate those academic subject areas with the arts. At the secondary level, music departments coordinated an average of 3.9 partnerships per school, whereas the other fine arts departments coordinated far fewer: theater (1.5), dance (1.4), and visual arts (1.1). The non-fine arts departments coordinated very few. When disaggregated by CLI status, most coordinating departments were similar, but CLI schools had many more community arts partnerships coordinated through their dance and theater departments than did non-CLI schools (Figure 16).

Figure 16.

In 2018–2019, dance and theater departments coordinated more arts partnerships at CLI schools than at non-CLI schools.
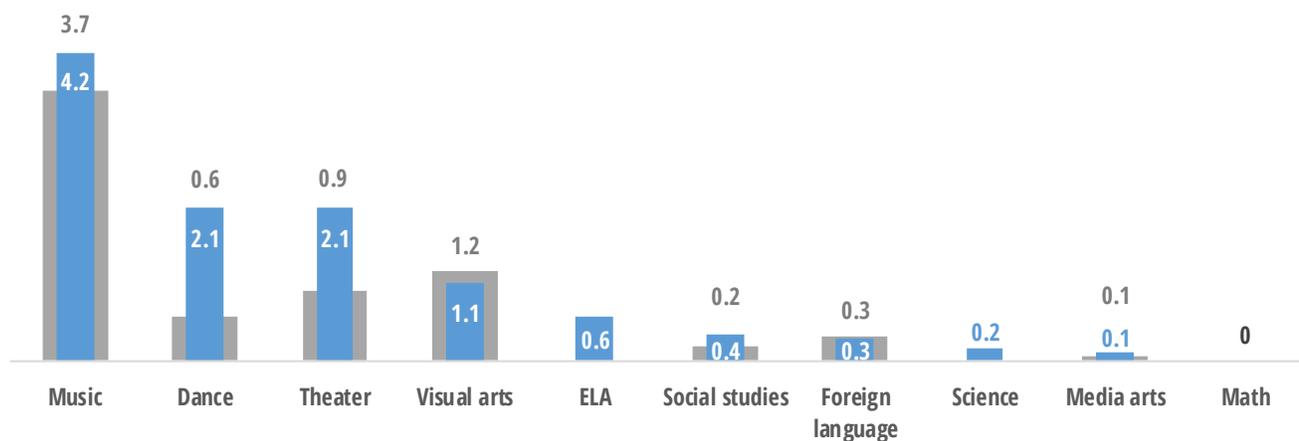
Source. 2018–2019 AISD Arts Inventory
Note. (*n* = 83) ELA = English language arts

Finding 9: Students at CLI Title I schools had twice the exposure to community arts partners that all other schools had.

Because partnerships vary in duration, quality, and type, counting the number of partnerships provides only a partial representation of impacts on students. Duration matters. We added a calculation of the average student exposure rate for each school using the number of students participating, the number of experiences, and the experience duration. Across all elementary schools, the average exposure rate was 10.2 hours per student per year, ranging from 0 to 45 hours per student. At the secondary level, the average exposure rate was 4.9 hours per student per year, ranging from 0 to 29 hours per student. On average, secondary students had half as much exposure to community arts partners as did elementary students; in addition, that exposure was much more clustered around a smaller group of students who were taking advanced-level fine arts classes than through integration into core academic content. Interestingly, at both the elementary and secondary levels, Title I schools that received support from CLI reported higher average student arts partner exposure rates than did non-CLI schools, and surprisingly, they even reported higher average student arts partner exposure rates

than did non-Title I schools that were supported by CLI (Figure 17). CLI supports its foundational schools with eight dollars per student in prekindergarten through 8th grade and four dollars per student at the high school level. When a school becomes a sustaining CLI school, it receives three dollars per student, regardless of level. Title I status does not influence the amount allocated to the school to support partnerships. Figure 17 suggests that CLI's Title I schools were maximizing their allocation by fostering longer term partnerships that provided more hours of student exposure to professional artists in the community.

Figure 17.

In 2018–2019, the students' average annual hours of exposure to community arts partners at both elementary and secondary levels was highest for students at CLI Title I schools.

	Elementary			Secondary			
14.0	9.2	7.7	6.6	6.7	4.6	4.7	2.4
CLI Title I	CLI non-Title I	Non-CLI non-Title I	Non-CLI Title I	CLI Title I	CLI non-Title I	Non-CLI non-Title I	Non-CLI Title I
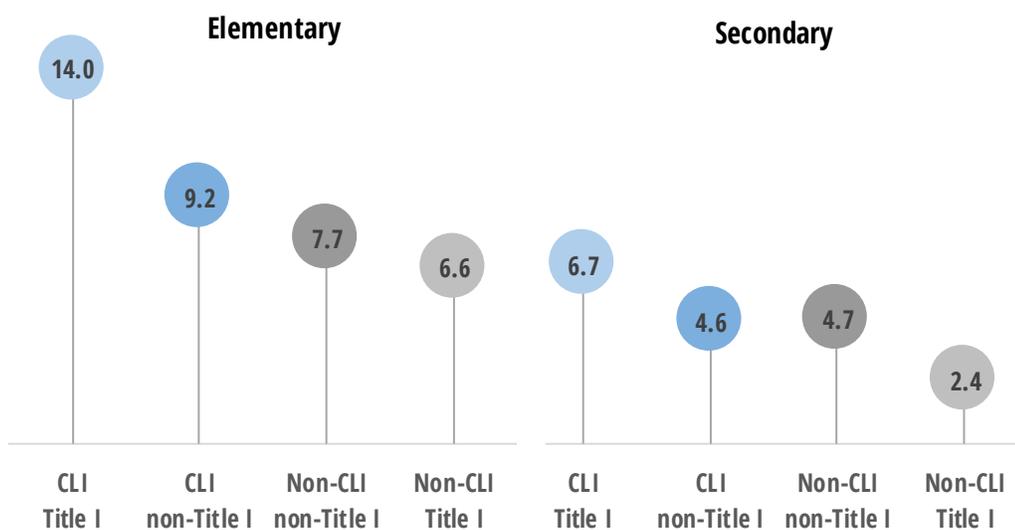
Source. 2018–2019 AISD Arts Inventory

Note. (n = 115) Exposure rate is defined as the number of hours per year that students are exposed to art partners.

Creative Teaching

Creative instruction across the curriculum is a critical pillar of CLI, as AISD Superintendent Paul Cruz states: "Creative Teaching is a signature pedagogy of the district." The CLI initiative supports a professional development model that empowers teachers to use a set of research-based Creative Teaching strategies to enhance students' learning. Unlike many forms of arts integration, which match a prescribed arts standard with an academic standard within the curriculum, the Creative Teaching strategies are defined by the instructional technique rather than the curriculum content. The Creative Teaching techniques draw on practices from drama, visual arts, music, movement, and digital media as the instructional framework to engage students, drive inquiry, promote rigor, and create personal connections to the material in any content area. The Creative Teaching strategies developed or curated by MINDPOP for inclusion in the initiative provide opportunities for the generation of ideas, creative choice making, analysis, synthesis, mental and physical modeling, point of view taking, translation of ideas, the transfer of learning to different contexts, as well as the opportunity to share ideas with others. These essential elements of Creative Teaching are natural and logical extensions of many powerful instructional theories, most of which are aligned with brain-based

pedagogy, socio-constructivist learning theory, multiple intelligence theory, project-based learning, total physical response, and schema development and are also designed to foster social-emotional learning and cultural proficiency.

CLI's goal for arts-rich schools is that 75% to 100% of the teachers are competent in using Creative Teaching strategies and use them throughout their curricula, at least once per week. For schools just beginning CLI, the Creative Teaching professional development model starts with skill-based workshops, led by CLI staff, MINDPOP, and representatives of local arts organizations.

Administrators at CLI schools commit to scheduling two professional development workshops per year for their entire teaching staff for 3 foundational years.[2] In the first year of adoption, they study drama-based strategies; in the second year, they study visual-arts-based strategies; and in the third year, they study music– and movement-based strategies. The workshops teach how to successfully facilitate the specific arts-based strategies; when to use the strategies within the lesson cycle or in the curriculum; and how to use each particular strategy for cognitive, social, artistic, or academic gains.

The CLI professional development model extends the skill-based workshops with ongoing coaching opportunities that integrate arts-based strategies with core curriculum content. During planning sessions, coaches usually work with grade-level teams (elementary) or subject teams (secondary) to develop teachers' skills in the selection of an appropriate Creative Teaching strategy to achieve specific learning objectives. Together, they select the strategy and then plan an effective lesson outline. During the modeling, the coach demonstrates or co-teaches sessions with specific strategies in the classroom. After modeling or co-teaching, the coach and teacher reflect on the experience and discuss the implementation of the instruction. During these visits, coaches gather information about frequency of strategy use in the classroom and assess each teacher on his or her ongoing development of competency to implement the strategies.

Beyond the core professional development opportunities that CLI provides schools in their first 3 foundational years of being a CLI school, the initiative also works to keep Creative Teaching active on sustaining campuses by training teacher leaders on those campuses. Three leaders from each sustaining campus, called *creative learning leaders*, are trained and supported to deliver refresher courses in Creative Teaching and support the principal in a variety of ways related to being a creative campus. CLI also offers several stand-alone professional development opportunities, including campus-wide refresher courses for teachers at sustaining schools, a 4-day Drama for Schools summer workshop, and short content-specific courses that are open to any teacher in the district. These are sometimes taught by the CLI staff, sometimes by arts partners, and often by both.

[2] **The workshops were developed by MINDPOP and partnerships with field experts, including Katie Dawson and Lara Dossett from Drama for Schools, Krissie Marty from Forklift Dance, Emily Cayton and Hanna Zurko from The Contemporary Austin, Dr. Tina Curran and Dr. Megan Alrutz from the University of Texas at Austin, and Marcelo Teson and Charlie Lockwood from Texas Folklife Resources. Workshop facilitators were drawn from these organizations, as well as Creative Action, Paramount, ZACH Theatre, Ballet Austin, Austin Soundwaves, and others. Facilitators of the professional development workshops received regular ongoing training from MINDPOP.**

This robust professional development model is ultimately designed to build Creative Teaching skills in teachers of all grade levels and all subjects. By the end of the 3-year foundational program, the goal is that at least 75% of teachers are competent in using Creative Teaching strategies and use them throughout their curricula at least once a week. To measure progress toward this ambitious goal, and to guide program improvement, we used survey data from the teachers and implementation assessments from the coaches to understand how teaching practices are affected by professional development and coaching opportunities.

Professional Development Opportunities in Creative Teaching

Finding 10: Teachers rated their professional development opportunities in Creative Teaching extremely favorably.

In 2018–2019, 851 staff participated in and reflected on 79 unique professional development sessions in Creative Teaching, tailored to subject and grade level. Most teachers were offered a session in the fall and another session in the spring. Survey results from 1,213 responses indicated that almost all teachers found the experience to be highly engaging (Figure 18).

Figure 18.

Almost all teachers (90–95%) strongly agreed or agreed that the workshops were engaging, inspiring, invigorating, and relevant.
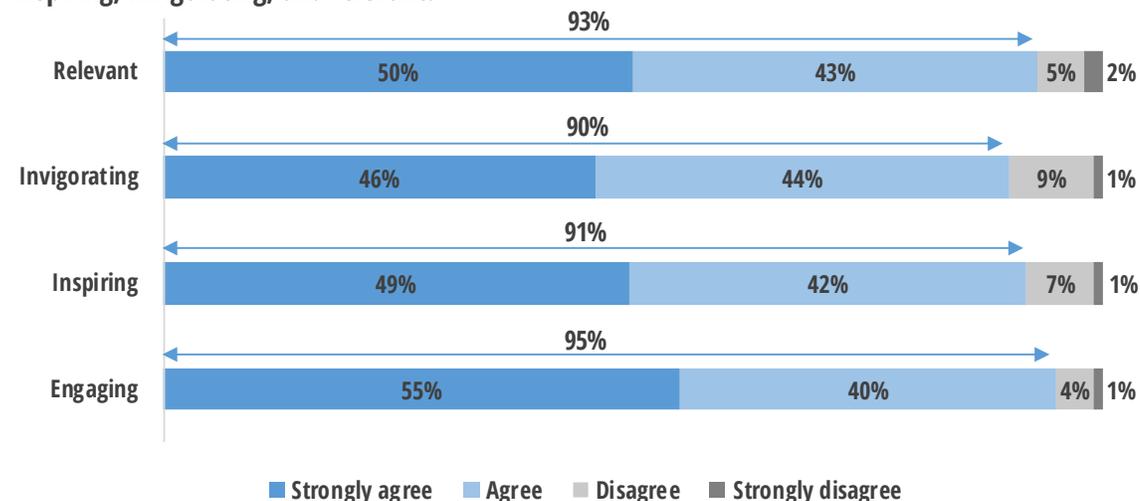
Source. CLI Workshop Survey.
Note. *n* = 1,213

In addition to workshops, teachers were provided with opportunities to receive follow-up coaching. In 2018–2019, 335 teachers received coaching from the 3.5 full-time CLI Creative Teaching coaches. Of these interactions 9% were in large groups, 48% were in small groups, and 43% were engaged individually. At the end of the year, teachers were surveyed about their experiences working with coaches. On average, teachers rated the overall quality of their coach as 4.5 (*n* = 224) on a scale from 0 (unskilled) to 5 (highly skilled).

For more information about how Creative Teaching is used in the classroom—down to the individual strategy at a specific school or group of schools—see the interactive report *Creative Teaching (2018–2019)* on the DRE web page. It also highlights the support teachers received to develop their Creative Teaching skills, as well as shout-outs to helpful colleagues on this topic. Finally, the interactive report contains feedback from the program's Creative Campus leaders about their success stories and use of resources.

www.austinisd.org/dre

Finding 11: More than half of the teachers reported using Creative Teaching frequently and reported it engaged students and improved their instruction.

When teachers were asked how often they used Creative Teaching, 58% reported using it once a week or more in their classrooms (Figure 19). At the elementary level, 66% of teachers reporting using Creative Teaching strategies once a week or more, and at the secondary level, 45% of teachers reported using Creative Teaching strategies once a week or more. Overall, we can estimate that, within the classrooms of the teachers who responded to the survey, that Creative Teaching strategies were used at least 46,000 times in 2018–2019. In elementary schools, where grade-level teachers cover all core subject areas, teachers reported they used Creative Teaching most often when teaching English language arts (77%, Figure 20). While most teachers used Creative Teaching strategies from several different art forms, the art form that teachers used most was movement (73%; Figure 21).

Figure 19.
Fifty-eight percent of teachers reported they used Creative Teaching strategies once a week or more.

Every day — 15%
Twice a week — 19%
Once a week — 24%   ↑ Met goal
Once a month — 21%
Once a semester — 5%
Once a year — 2%
I haven't used any this year — 15%
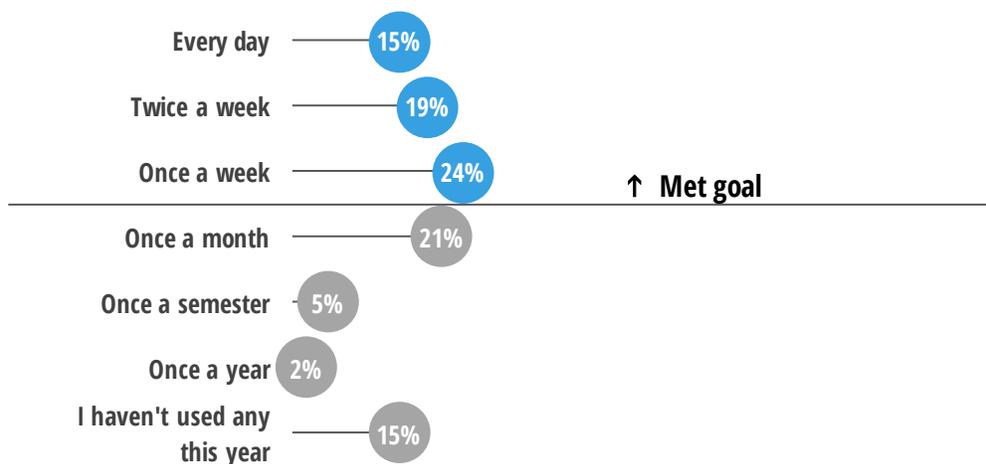
Source. CLI Workshop Survey
Note. (*n* = 1,044)

Figure 20.

Elementary teachers who used Creative Teaching reported most frequently using the strategies during English language arts instruction.

English language arts
(*n* =303) — 77%

Mathematics
(*n* = 242) — 62%

Science
(*n* = 227) — 58%

Social studies
(*n* = 185) — 47%
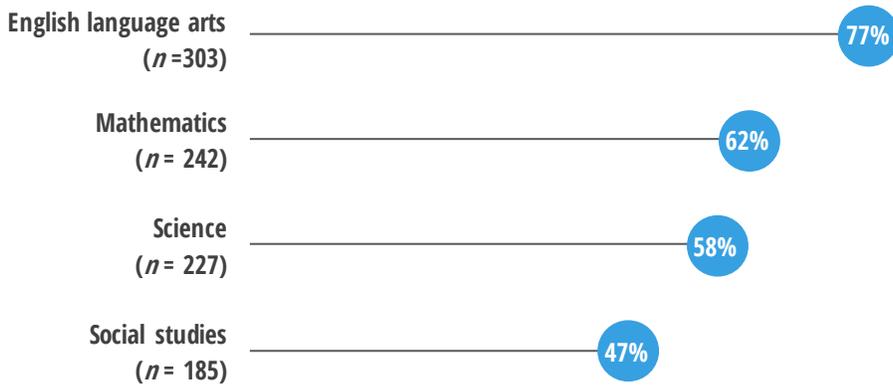
Source. CLI Workshop Survey
Note. The figure above is limited to elementary general teachers where grade-level teachers covered all core subject areas. (*n* = 391)

Figure 21.

The most frequently used Creative Teaching strategy art form was movement.

Movement
(*n* = 649) — 73%

Visual arts
(*n* = 516) — 58%

Drama
(*n* = 438) — 49%

Music
(*n* = 377) — 42%

Digital media
(*n* = 306) — 34%
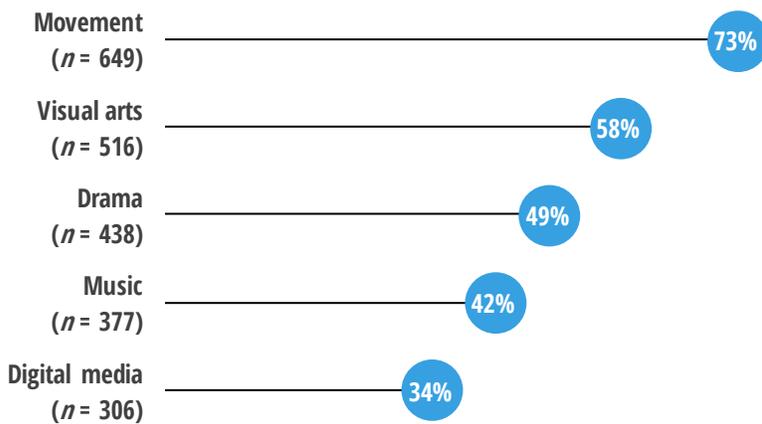
Source. CLI Workshop Survey
Note. (*n* = 890)

19

When we asked teachers why they used Creative Teaching in their classrooms, almost 80% of teachers indicated they used Creative Teaching for one or more of the following reasons: (a) engages my students, (b) improves students' behavior, (c) fosters content retention, (d) increases students' voice, (e) improves my instructional practice, (f) aids classroom management, (g) improves students' achievement, and (h) increases the rigor of learning (Figure 22). More than 40% indicated four or more reasons.

Figure 22.
Seventy-nine percent of teachers selected one or more reasons for using Creative Teaching in the classroom.

16%	26%	36%	21%

■ 7 to 9 uses selected　　■ 4 to 6 uses selected　　■ 1 to 3 uses selected　　■ Did not select any uses

Source. CLI Workshop Survey
Note. (*n* = 1,118)

The vast majority of teachers reported that using Creative Teaching engaged their students (94%), and importantly, more than half also indicated it improved their instructional practice (56%) and fostered content retention (51%).

Finding 12: CLI faced coaching implementation challenges in 2018–2019.

Despite multiple coaching implementation challenges, teachers' perceptions of Creative Teaching utility remained high in 2018–2019. Although perceptions in utility and coach quality decreased slightly, this was not unexpected due to the reduction in coaching support provided in 2018–2019. Specifically, in 2018–2019, only 34% of foundational teachers received coaching services, whereas in 2017–2018, coaching services were received by 60% of foundational teachers.

Several factors had an impact on the availability of CLI coaching. First, CLI served one less foundational vertical team than it did in past years. Second, two of the secondary-level foundational campuses (Murchison Middle School and Anderson High School) experienced unique challenges that shifted campus and district prioritization away from instructional professional development opportunities, and therefore prohibited the CLI team from working with teachers at those schools. Third, one of the Creative Teaching coaches was on personal leave for a large portion of the academic year, which greatly reduced the coaching available to the vertical team. Finally, the district began to redesign the academic department and campus support structures through instructional coaching. New professional development demands on coach time and time spent designing the new systems of support for the district necessitated that coaches spent less time doing direct coaching on campuses.

The 2019–2020 organizational structure for AISD instructional coaches will be markedly different from the 2018–2019 structure. The district will adopt a consolidated approach, with coaching delivered by coaches with multiple skill sets, rather than a

programmatic delivery model. The CLI coaching strategy will need to be reimagined in 2019–2020 to accommodate these complex district changes.

Next Steps and Recommendations

At the beginning of the 2019–2020 academic school year, many changes were in progress for CLI. The district has a new vision for how it will structure instructional coaching, now Creative Teaching is incorporated in all subjects for all schools by the central instructional coaching staff. These coaches will need to learn the Creative Teaching strategies for themselves and learn how to coach toward their integration. Simultaneously, we are planning to take the lessons we have learned from many years of working with the Creative Campus current rubric and create the next generation of arts richness measurement at the campus level. Given that this change is expected, we know future data will be different from past data, but some findings from this implementation report can be used to support recommendations for future implementation:

Recommendation 1: We recommend that sustaining campuses have planned reinforcements beginning in year 6, to keep levels of arts richness high. This support might include refresher courses in Creative Teaching or short-term intensive coaching support if campuses have been out of the foundational phase for 3 years. Also at the campus level, this might include administrative coaching to support campus improvement plans that target arts-richness goals.

Recommendation 2: We recommend formal sharing of best practices from the elementary school leaders who have found creative ways to offer dance, drama, and media arts learning objectives with leaders who have not yet found ways to make this work in their schools. As this report shows, CLI schools were more likely to meet those learning objectives in 2018–2019 than non-CLI schools. One possibility is to match a successful CLI elementary school with one of the new elementary schools that will be brought on board in 2019–2020 to share strategies for teaching those learning objectives and provide great examples of successful implementation in a public format.

Recommendation 3: We recommend continued support to develop secondary arts partnerships. The report shows that although secondary music, dance, and theater departments are coordinating arts partnerships, integration into academic subject areas (e.g., foreign language, science, and math) is still needed. We recommend support in the form of collaboration between the secondary fine arts departments and the academic departments to facilitate connections to arts partners who could serve in math, science, foreign language, and social studies departments.

Recommendation 4: We recommend the development of supports to increase the frequency of Creative Teaching use. This report shows that 58% of teachers used Creative Teaching strategies in their classrooms once a week or more. To meet the long-term goal of 75%, in light of the redesign of the campus support structures provided by the academic department, campus and district systems will need to be leveraged differently. We recommend more campus-level support systems, such as

peer-to-peer coaching or greater support from principals. At the district level, the program could support principals with an in-depth administrator professional development workshop or with increased mentorships for principals as individuals or in small groups. Likewise, CLI leaders will need to ensure that academic department leaders and instructional coaches who have assumed responsibility for the implementation of Creative Teaching in the classroom receive substantial levels of support to master Creative Teaching strategies and ensure its subsequent frequent use in the classroom.

	Primary Component Score				
	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**
Sequential Fine Arts Instruction 1. Percent of grade levels where most students receive regular music and visual arts instruction (at least 45 mins every three days)	71-100%	43-70%	29-42%	14-28%	0-14%
2. Percent of grade levels where most students receive regular theatre, dance or media arts instruction (at least 6 meetings with a certified teacher in the area)	43-100%	28-42%	0-27%	Offered < 6 meetings, but not regularly	None offered
Creative Teaching Across the Curricula Percentage of general classroom teachers who use creative teaching strategies or arts integrated instruction at least once a week	75-100%	50-74%	25-49%	10-24%	< 10%
Community Arts Partnerships 1. Percent of grade levels with at least two community arts partners during school time	71-100%	41-70%	21-40%	10-20%	< 10%
2. Average number of hours of arts exposure per student during school time	≥ 15 hrs.	10-14.9 hrs.	5-9.9 hrs.	1-4.9 hrs.	< 1 hr.
After School Percent of grade levels (PreK-6) with after school arts opportunities in at least two art forms	66-100%	38-65%	25-37%	13-24%	0-12%

Appendix A: Elementary Creative Campus Rubric

Additional Components	Criteria to meet each component	
	Met (Yes = +1)	Not Yet Met (No = +0)
Community Building Through the Arts **Number of campus created arts experiences this year to engage families, faculty, and community**	≥ 8	< 8
Leadership **Arts goals and strategies are included in the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP)**	Yes	No
Communication **Frequency of school communication to families about the value of creative learning in person or through print or social media**	At least monthly or at least once a semester	At least once a year or Rarely/ Never
Professional Development **Percentage of teachers who participate in creative teaching or arts integration professional development**	50-100%	< 49%
Facilities **Campus facilities meet the 2008 Fine Arts Education Specifications or sufficiently accommodate arts programming**	Meets standard or makes accommodations	

Appendix B: Secondary Creative Campus Rubric

	Primary Component Score				
	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**
Sequential Fine Arts Instruction 1. **Percentage of students taking the prescribed amount of fine arts classes during their tenure at your school**	90-100%	80-89%	70-79%	60-69%	< 60%
2. **Percentage of students exceeding the prescribed amount of fine arts classes during their tenure at your school**	90-100%	80-89%	70-79%	60-69%	< 60%
Creative Teaching Across the Curricula **Percentage of general classroom teachers who use creative teaching strategies or arts integrated instruction at least once a week**	75-100%	50-74%	25-49%	10-24%	< 10%
Community Arts Partnerships 1. **Departments coordinating arts partnerships during school time**	≥ 2 non-FA departments	1 non-FA department	≥ 2 FA departments	1 FA department	0
2. **Average number of hours of arts exposure per student during school time**	≥ 15 hrs.	10-14.9 hrs.	5-9.9 hrs.	1-4.9 hrs.	< 1 hr.
After School **Number of art forms in which after school opportunities are offered for more than one ability level (e.g., beginning, interme-**	4-5	3	2	1	0

Additional Components	Criteria to meet each component	
	Met = "Yes"	Not Yet Met = "No"
Community Building Through the Arts **Number of campus created arts experiences this year to engage families, faculty, and community**	≥ 10	< 10
Leadership **Arts goals and strategies are included in the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP)**	Yes	No
Communication **Frequency of school communication to families about the value of creative learning in person or through print or social media**	At least monthly or at least once a semester	At least once a year or Rarely/Never
Professional Development **Percentage of teachers who participate in creative teaching or arts integration professional development**	50-100%	< 49%
Facilities **Campus facilities meet the 2008 Fine Arts Education Specifications or sufficiently accommodate arts programming**	Meets standard or makes accommodations	

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